THE HISTORY OF ROCK

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The Girl Singers

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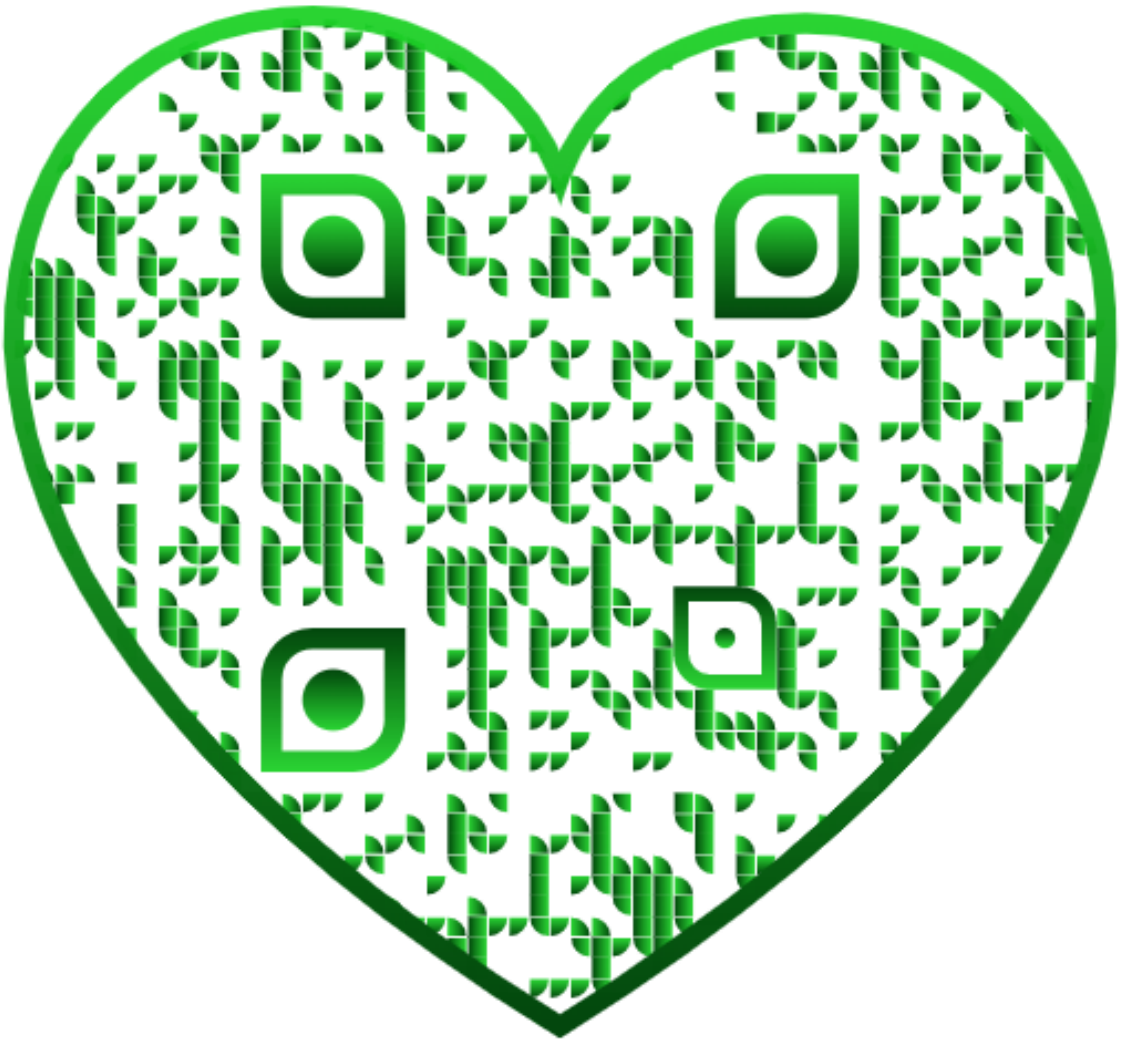

THE HISTORY OF ROCK

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Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck – three guitarists with world-wide reputations and immense significance in the growth of heavy rock in the late Sixties and early Seventies. All three passed through the ranks of the Yard-birds, Britain's premier R&B band after the Rolling Stones. Other contenders for the Stones' crown included Newcastle's Animals and Manfred Mann, led by the bes-pectacled South African of the same name.

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Puppets on a String

Were the girl singers of the Sixties just dolly birds?

THERE WERE NO BAD GIRLS in British pop music in the early Sixties – certainly nothing to compare with the most daring American girl groups of the same period: the Ronettes with their slutty beehives and knowing eyes or the Shangri-Las, who sang about bikers and looked like they did unmentionable things in the back seats of cars. But in Britain – where Cliff Richard could be cast as a brooding loner – rock'n'roll had never been a really dangerous force. It was still a hybrid: American rebellion grafted onto a respectable, old-fashioned show-business tradition.

Helen Shapiro was the nearest that first generation came to a female rock star, or at least to Brenda Lee. But her career was over by 1963, the casualty of a new era and a new generation of pop stars. The real heyday of the British girl singer lasted from about 1964 to 1967, taking in Merseybeat and Swinging London. But that connection between teen music and British Variety proved an enduring one: at the end of 1966 Cilla Black and Dusty Springfield were both appearing in pantomime, as had the Beatles (and Gerry and the Pacemakers, Freddie and the Dreamers and Cliff and the Shadows) before them. After 1967, this connection was broken.

Symbols of hope

Petula Clark, with her clipped, choirgirl diction, was an English rose of the Fifties variety transplanted into English pop – and 'Downtown' proved how charming such a contradiction could be. But she was an outsider in this group; too genteel, too much the seasoned professional. Cilla and Sandie and Lulu are the real representatives of this period. They were average girls who found stardom almost by accident and represented what the average girl could attain. They were symbols of hope, of new possibilities in an era when Mary Quant and Barbara Hulaniki had allowed shop-girls to dress better than debs.

No doubt their images were carefully monitored, but Cilla Black, at least, seems to have been just what she was painted to be. An interview with Cilla in the *New Musical Express* of 27 March 1964 comes as a shock amid the showbusiness clichés of the period: here is a real person talking. Giggling loudly over steak (and asking where the chips were) she comes across as forthright, high-spirited and endearingly tactless; both a true pop fan and a sensible girl that Mums would approve of. 'I don't like girl fans screaming at girl singers. I think it's insulting, I really do,' she remarked.

Cilla had just scored a Number 1 hit with 'Anyone Who Had A Heart', and said of her next release. 'It'll have to be upbeat. Real *wild* R&B if I can get away with it. I love that. And I'd like to do a calypso and blues. Oh, I'd love to

Long-legged Sandie Shaw – cool and fashionable, she epitomised the look of the mid Sixties.

do all kind of way out stuff if they'll let me.'

It was not to be, however. If the girl singers were manipulated by the industry, it was in their choice of material – or in the material that was chosen for them. Their songs relied on tested formulas, on conventional expressions of the various shades of romance; but then so did the songs of everyone else in the early Sixties. The difference is that the girl singers had more static careers: they outlasted the lesser Merseybeat groups, but never made any radical shifts.

It was noticeable that the girl singers were all associated with some male figures who were supposed to dominate them or direct their careers. To a certain extent this was merely a general prejudice, a feeling that females could not control their own musical destiny. But it is interesting that Cilla Black's music was organised by George Martin to a degree that he could never have managed with the Beatles; that Sandie Shaw relied heavily on Eve Taylor and Chris Andrews for personal musical advice; that Mickie Most turned Lulu's style from that of rocker to family entertainer; and that Petula Clark's husband (Claud Wolff) and recording managers (Alan A. Freeman and Tony Hatch) were crucial to her success, in enabling her to find the approach that brought her worldwide popularity.

The exception was Dusty Springfield, the only truly remarkable talent that the era of British girl singers produced. She stood apart from this group: too passionate and too gifted a singer to count as a girl next door. Another outsider was Marianne Faithfull, who was simply too beautiful, too sexy, too enigmatic and too perverse. (The careers of both these singers will be featured at a later point.)

Dolly-bird appeal

Sandie Shaw was almost in the Marianne Faithfull category. Combining the image of a blank faced dolly-bird with a languid, mysterious sex appeal, Sandie was too elegant to be a family favourite. But she was an image that every teenage girl in boutiques across the country could aspire to. And of all the girl singers save Marianne Faithfull, Sandie was the one who seemed closest to the heart of Swinging London.

She also gave a wonderful impression of being dumb but smart. A 1966 issue of *New Musical Express* gives this account of a conversation between Sandie Shaw and Donovan, as quoted by Sandie herself:

Donovan: 'I think you are beautiful. I love beautiful minds.'
Sandie: 'Uh?'
Donovan: 'I like beautiful people. I would like to write a book about your beautiful mind.'
Sandie: 'Yeah?'
Donovan: 'Beauty is beauty.'
Sandie: 'Thanks.'

These were true Sixties girls, and psychedelia did not suit them at all: they were much too unpretentious and matter-of-fact. Only Dusty Springfield rode the musical changes, at least until the early Seventies, and she was a soul singer, not a pop star. Marianne Faithfull's mystique travelled into the late Sixties, but only as Mick Jagger's girlfriend: she would wait another decade to take her musical revenge with the release of her acclaimed *Broken English* album in 1980.

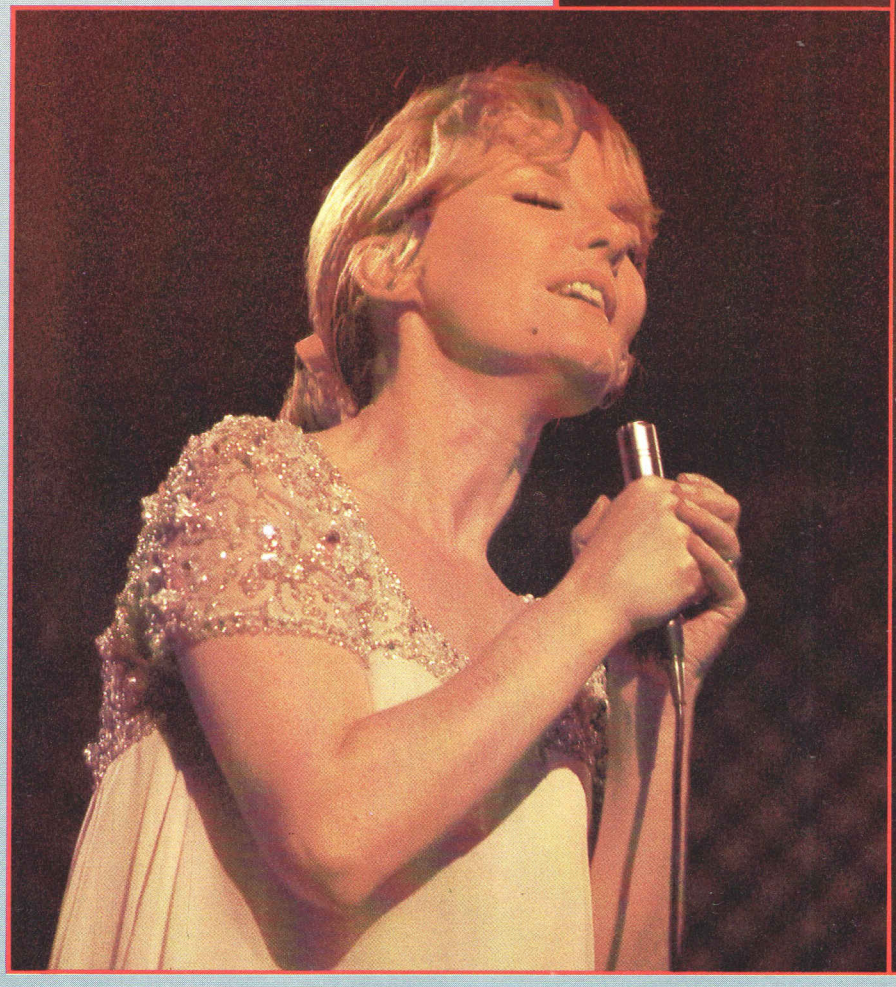
Images of an era

The rest had fairly gentle careers – nothing as poignant as Helen Shapiro's rapid rise and fall. Their audience grew older with them, ensuring Cilla and Lulu a cherished role in guest slots on television. Petula went back to show-business and Sandie, as the 'clothes horse' of the group, married a designer. Looking back, it is surprising how distinct their personalities were: each had her own television show in their heyday, and they made far more impact on popular music than women did in the late Sixties or early Seventies. They were a unique phenomenon: ordinary girls with good (but not great) voices who each had a star quality that made them symbols for their generation.

Part of the subsequent nostalgia for these girl singers is also nostalgia for the time itself, of course. It was a wonderfully unsnobbish age, when there was no split between commercial and progressive rock, no real generation gap and no hysterical turnover of musical trends and movements.

Ask anyone what Cilla Black or Sandie Shaw's biggest hit was, and there may well be a confused pause. The songs were less important than the image and what they represented: a time of bright, disposable clothes and music, a time when Britain felt optimistic.

MARY HARRON



The female faces of British pop in the mid Sixties: (from left, top row) Lulu, Dusty Springfield; (bottom row) Petula Clark, Cilla Black and Marianne Faithfull.

ROCK '64

If 1963 marked the arrival of British beat, then 1964 saw its flowering and its worldwide expansion. In January 1964 the Beatles had their first US Number 1 and the following month saw American Beatlemania reach a crescendo. The Beatles became a media phenomenon; they were rarely out of the pages of the popular press on either side of the Atlantic and, for that matter, rarely out of the charts as well.

Following on the coat-tails of the Beatles were a whole host of UK beat groups who found success in the United States, which had previously proved impenetrable to British performers: the Dave Clark Five, the Rolling Stones, the Animals and Herman's Hermits all had major US chart hits during 1964.

The UK charts in 1964 were dominated by home-grown groups; Diana Ross and the Supremes and Roy Orbison were the only two US acts to reach Number 1 spot in the UK in 1964. Despite the continuing dominance of beat groups, solo singers could still make an impact. Sandie Shaw, for example, rose from obscurity to top the UK charts in October with her second release.

Above: The Beatles – a sensation in the United States during 1964.

January
6 The Rolling Stones open a UK tour with American girl group the Ronettes; the Stones top the bill.
15 The Beatles' 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' makes Number 1 spot in the US and is the most successful chart record of the year.
16 Tottenham-based group the Dave Clark Five topple the Beatles from the UK Number 1 position with 'Glad All Over' – the Dave Clark Five's first Number 1.
17 *Billboard* magazine notes that the Beatles' 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' is the fastest-ever million-seller in the United States.
31 An Epic Records publicity release in the United States claims that the 'Tottenham Sound' of the Dave Clark Five is more potent than the Beatles' 'Liverpool Sound'.

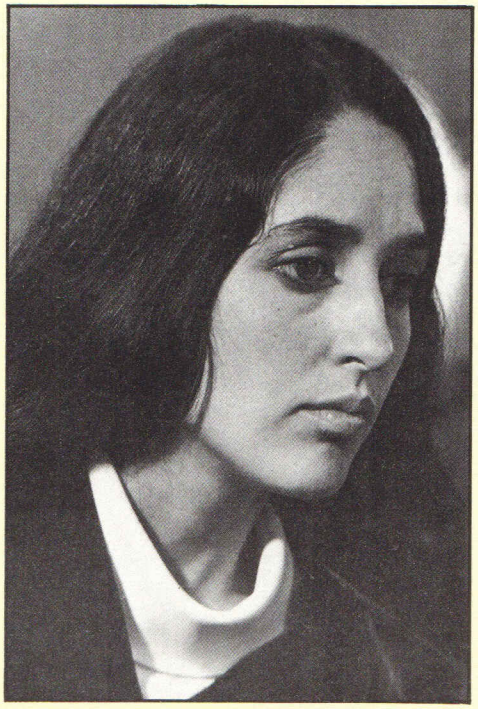
February
7 The Beatles fly out to begin their first tour of the United States. Beatlemania is at full swing and over 50,000 requests for seats flood the CBS studios where the 'Ed Sullivan Show' is to take place.
9 The Beatles make their television debut on the 'Ed Sullivan Show'; audience figures for the show break all previous records.
21 The Rolling Stones' Bo Diddley-influenced version of the Crickets' 'Not Fade Away' is released in the UK.
27 Cilla Black tops the UK charts with the Burt Bacharach-Hal David composition, 'Anyone Who Had A Heart'.

March
The Beatles receive their fourth American gold disc for *Please Please Me*.
20 Capitol Records announces that, for the first time in recording history, an album (*Please Please Me*) has outsold its singles counterpart in record units.
28 *Seventeen* magazine notes that some 11 million American girls spend 321 million dollars on records annually.
29 Britain's first pirate radio station goes on the air as Radio Caroline starts broadcasting five miles off the East Anglian coast. The first DJs include Simon Dee, Carl Conway and John Junkin.

Right: A soulful Joan Baez. Below: Mick Jagger and a beauty contest winner.

April
2 The Beatles are at the top of the UK charts again with 'Can't Buy Me Love'.
4 Brian Poole and the Tremeloes join Gerry and the Pacemakers for a package tour of Australia which includes Dusty Springfield, Gene Pitney and Freddie and the Dreamers.
24 Folk singer Joan Baez refuses to pay 60 per cent of her income tax as a protest against US military expenditure.
30 The Beatles have received some 140,000 dollars in royalties from American sales of 'Beatles' chewing gum (from December 1963 to date).

May
10 Bob Dylan arrives in London to begin a UK concert tour.
23 'I Get Around' by the Beach Boys enters the US charts and becomes the group's first Number 1.
25 On tour in the United States the Dave Clark Five's bass guitarist Rick Huxley is treated for a gashed face after being mobbed by 5000 fans in Washington DC.
30 The German version of 'She Loves You' by the Beatles, 'Sie Liebt Dich', enters the US charts at Number 108 – it rises to Number 97.



June
The Yardbirds release their first single 'I Wish You Would'; it fails to reach the charts.
10 The Rolling Stones drop into the Chess studio in Chicago on their US tour and jam along with Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon.
16 The Rolling Stones interrupt their tour of America and fly back to Britain to play a gig at Magdalen College, Oxford,

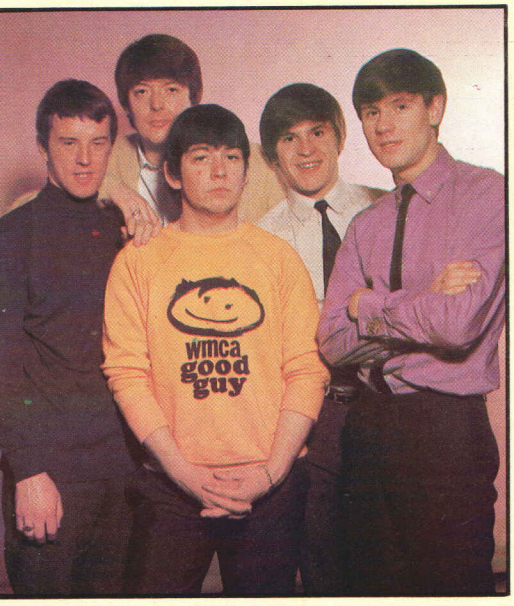
Left: The Supremes promoting 'Baby Love' on 'Thank Your Lucky Stars'.

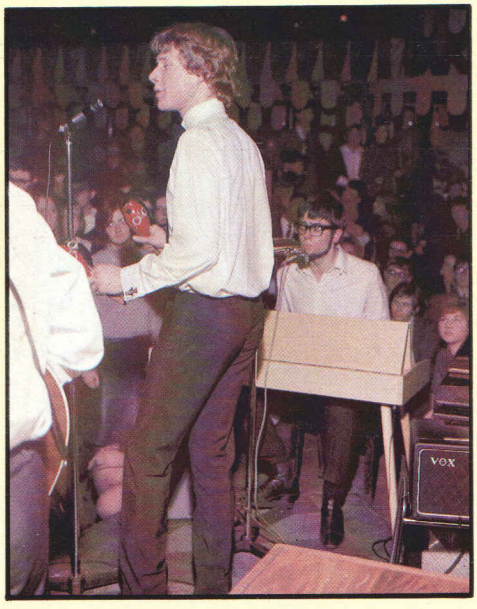
which had been booked a year previously. The fee: £100; the cost: £1500 in air fares.
19 Bob Dylan returns home following his UK tour. Of the rock scene in Britain, Dylan says: 'By contrast with some of what I heard, the Beatles are particularly conservative'.
20 The Four Seasons' 'Rag Doll' enters the US charts. Reaching Number 1 in July, it is the most successful of their eight hits during the year.

July
9 The Animals have a surprise Number 1 hit with 'House Of The Rising Sun'. One of the most successful records of 1964, it goes on to sell some eight million worldwide.
10 It is announced that harmonica sales in America are up by 50 per cent, and manufacturers give British groups credit for increased sales.
11 'Where Did Our Love Go' by Diana Ross and the Supremes enters the US charts. Reaching the Number 1 position, it was the first of five consecutive chart-toppers for the group.
16 'It's All Over Now' by the Rolling Stones tops the UK charts and becomes their first Number 1.
31 Jim Reeves is killed in an air crash a few miles from Nashville.

August
The Spencer Davis Group perform their first professional gig at the Golden Eagle pub in Birmingham to promote the release of their first record 'Dimples'. Nevertheless, it fails to make the charts.
3 The Rolling Stones star at a Longleat House pop concert – some 200 female fans reportedly faint when the Stones appear.
13 'Do Wah Diddy Diddy' by Manfred Mann tops the UK charts. Some 14 weeks in the charts, the record was the first of three Number 1 hits for Manfred Mann. The Mick Jagger-Keith Richard composition 'As Tears Go By' enters the UK charts, sung by Marianne Faithfull.

Below: Paul Jones and Manfred Mann. Below left: The Animals before their visit to the House of the Rising Sun?





September
4 Indonesia's minister of culture bans 'Beatle hairstyles'.
10 The Rolling Stones are given *Melody Maker*'s Most Popular Group award, and 'Not Fade Away' is voted the best song.
The Kinks have their first UK Number 1 with 'You Really Got Me'.
20 Bill Haley and the Comets open a tour of Britain in the hope of reviving interest in their brand of rock'n'roll.
24 Herman's Hermits reach the UK Number 1 spot with 'I'm Into Something Good'.

October
American guitarist-vocalist Jim (later Roger) McGuinn forms the Byrds in Los Angeles, California.
7 The Supremes fly in to London to promote their latest record, 'Baby Love'.
8 Roy Orbison is at the top of the British charts with 'Oh Pretty Woman'.
9 The Rolling Stones cancel a Christmas tour of South Africa following talks with the Musicians' Union which is opposed to apartheid.
22 The Shangri-Las begin a five-day trip of Great Britain to play television and radio dates.
Sandie Shaw has her first UK Number 1 with '(There's) Always Something There To Remind Me'.

November
9 Peter and Gordon appear on the 'Ed Sullivan Show' following the British chart success of 'World Without Love'.
13 The Rolling Stones release 'Little Red Rooster'; it becomes their second Number 1 of the year.
19 The Supremes' 'Baby Love' is at Number 1 in the UK, registering the first British chart-topper for the Tamla-Motown label.

December
4 Elvis Presley's withdrawal from the musical and social world is reported by the *New York Times:* 'He is never seen at public restaurants or night clubs, never attends star-studded premieres and is completely out of the social whirl.'
10 Soul singer Sam Cooke is gunned down in a Los Angeles motel while reportedly attempting to molest a female singer.
The Moody Blues have their first UK chart success with 'Go Now', which becomes their first and only Number 1 in January of the following year.
The Beatles are at Number 1 in the UK with 'I Feel Fine', which remains at the top for five weeks.
18 Answering criticism of rock'n'roll, Neil Sedaka replies: 'For ten years rock music and its performers have done more than any religion, political philosophy and the United Nations in unifying people.' ADRIAN GILBERT, JENNY DAWSON

Barefoot in the Charts

Sandie Shaw: symbol of the Swinging Sixties

SANDIE SHAW ARRIVED on the pop scene at the height of the British beat boom in 1964. A part-time singer from Dagenham, Essex, she was introduced by the Hollies to Adam Faith who, on the strength of her fragile good looks, persuaded his redoubtable manager, Eve Taylor, to sign her to Pye records.

Tall and skinny, her dark hair fashionably cut by Vidal Sassoon, Sandie typified those English girls who, emboldened by the adventurous spirit of the Sixties, kept their accents but threw up dead-end jobs to become pop singers, models or King's Road dolly-birds. She had been born on 26 February 1947 as Sandra Goodrich, but had adopted the name Sandie Shaw when it was humorously suggested to her by Eve Taylor's husband.

Sandie's voice had great range – almost three octaves – and, though not a great technician, she had a vulnerable, tremulous appeal that was undeniably attractive. Wilful and determined to be a success, she was nevertheless prone to self-doubt and would let herself be mothered by Eve Taylor (then in her forties). Taylor also managed Val Doonican and several comedians, and was later to attempt to guide Sandie away from pop music towards family entertainment.

Ready Steady Sandie

Sandie's first record, 'As Long As You're Happy, Baby', flopped, but her subsequent working relationship with its writer and producer, Chris Andrews, proved the mainstay of her musical career. Sandie's second release in October 1964 was, however, a Burt Bacharach-Hal David song, '(There's) Always Something There To Remind Me', and it was this record that established her in the world of British pop. She sang the song barefoot on the television show 'Ready Steady Go!' and it shot up the charts to become her first Number 1.

Andrews' plaintive 'Girl Don't Come' provided a successful follow-up and reached the Number 3 spot in December 1964. Singer and songwriter became friends, and Sandie sometimes helped Andrews produce and write the lyrics, although 'Till the Night Begins To Die', a track from the 1966 album *Me*, was her only full composition. Their records together, made at the studio of either Philips or Chappell, were then leased to Pye in one of the first such arrangements in the UK.

Taylor encouraged the working relationship, but the success of the partnership resulted from Andrews urging Sandie to participate in his songwriting. Andrews' methods were flexible: he would compose a melody which would then be gradually adapted in discussion with the artist, leaving lyrics until the last. If Sandie liked the outline he played her, he went ahead and finished the song, discreetly 'personalising' the lyric with references to actual events in her life. 'I was close to her,' remarked Andrews, 'so I knew what she was going through; if she'd had an unhappy love affair, for instance.'

His first songs for her, particularly 'Girl Don't Come', were composed in emulation of his heroes, Gerry Goffin and Carole King; another, more surprising, influence was West Indian, which Andrews had absorbed when performing in London clubs like the Flamingo before a predominantly black audience. 'Long Live Love', for example, disguises a calypso beat; he wrote it in five minutes flat and it gave Sandie her second Number 1 in May 1965. 'I'll Stop At Nothing' and 'Message Understood' were Top Ten hits in the same year, while 'How Can You Tell' went to Number 21. In February 1966 'Tomorrow' reached Number 9, and 'Nothing Comes Easy' peaked at Number 14 in June.

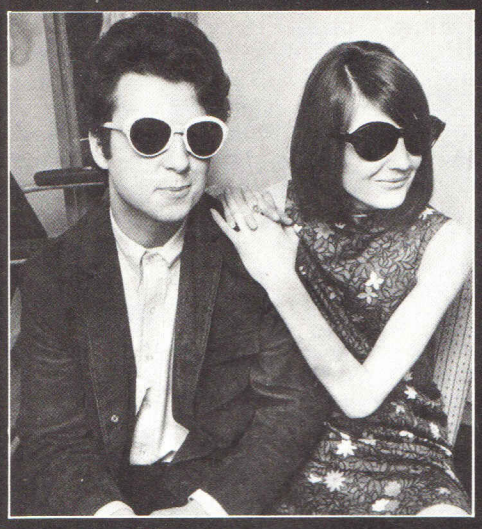
Singing for Britain

Despite the explosion of beat groups, Sandie Shaw was one of several British girl singers successful in this period, a trend she says the music industry fostered because 'it wanted a bit of leg to show'. Though not impartial, Andrews thinks Sandie was much better than Lulu, Cilla, Petula Clark and Marianne Faithfull. 'She had a much purer voice, although Dusty Springfield's records were probably much better produced. The people behind her were spending much more time in the studio than we were.' Sandie was always required to complete a minimum of three songs in a three-hour session; an additional two hours in which to mix the records were deemed a luxury.

Notwithstanding the lack of recording time, Sandie Shaw was a conscientious artist. 'She liked being at the top,' Andrews recalled, 'but she wouldn't sell herself short. She'd never go in for gimmicks. That business of her singing barefoot came about because she was always walking around without any shoes on, and a reporter was in the studio looking for a new angle. Then it stuck.'

Andrews' 'Run' and 'Think Sometimes About Me', released towards the end of 1966, both got no higher in the charts than Number 32. But by then Sandie had gone from package shows into cabaret and TV variety, and she was chosen to sing Britain's entry in the 1967 Eurovision Song Contest. The song selected was 'Puppet On A String' by Bill Martin and Phil Coulter, who apparently wrote it to a

Sandie brought vulnerable good looks and a voice of great range to the Sixties charts. '(There's) Always Something There To Remind Me', which she sang barefoot on TV (right), was her first Number 1. Inset above right: Sandie and her songsmith, Chris Andrews. Inset opposite: Manager Eve Taylor relaxes with her young star



formula based on her previous records. Sandie has since disclaimed the song and the contest, commenting: 'It wasn't hip. Adam Faith had to get me to do it.' Yet within two weeks of its release on 10 March 1967, 'Puppet On A String' had gone to Number 1, and her triumph in the contest finals, held in Vienna on 8 April, ensured a gold disc for sales of over a million records throughout Britain and Europe.

Top: The elegant look of a former pop star. Above: As Mrs Jeff Banks, Sandie talks fashion with DJ Simon Dee. Left: The lingering memory: mini-skirt and sex appeal

Fading fortunes

Sandie enjoyed the national elation her win created in Britain, and her popularity, both at home and abroad, was never greater. Only America, where she never performed, resisted her. Her career had already reached its peak, however, and 'Tonight In Tokyo', her next song by Martin and Coulter, only made the Top Thirty. Accordingly, she turned again to Chris Andrews.

He, meanwhile, had very profitably been performing and recording his own songs for Decca, at the suggestion of Rolling Stones manager Andrew Oldham. Sandie had originally rejected the tune of 'Yesterday Man', so Andrews re-wrote and recorded what became his biggest hit; it was a UK Number 2 in October 1965 and a million-seller in Germany the following year. It had a characteristically West Indian upbeat, an ingenious title and semi-comic lyrics whose novelty was increased by Andrews' squeaky falsetto and stockily unglamorous appearance.

Despite his own – albeit limited – success, Andrews could not fully revive Sandie's career. 'You've Not Changed' made the Top Twenty in October 1967, but 'Today' and 'Think It All Over', his final song for her in mid 1969, were only minor successes. 'Monsieur Dupont', a European song with English lyrics, restored her to the charts for the last time at Number 6 in March 1969. In 1971 she recorded a version of Joe South's 'Rose Garden', but it was Lynn Anderson who had the hit. She felt unhappy with her limitations that rock's new freedoms had exposed, and manager Eve Taylor was out of her depth in the new rock scene. Sandie ceased recording, and thereafter her only publicised appearances were, briefly and desultorily, as an actress – although she also appeared informally in working-men's clubs.

Fashion and Blue Mink

Having retired from the music world, Sandie married fashion designer Jeff Banks and through most of the Seventies involved herself in his business. She turned down various offers to record again although she did attempt to write some songs with Blue Mink – but without success. It was not until the early Eighties that she resumed her career when she recorded a single with synthetic pop stylists the British Electric Foundation; ironically, it was a version of 'Anyone Who Had A Heart', the song associated with old chart rival Cilla Black. Sandie Shaw, however, will always be identified with a more frivolous era, when her simple style had wide appeal.

MICHAEL WATTS

Sandie Shaw
Recommended Listening

The Golden Hits Of Sandie Shaw (Pye Golden Guinea GGL 0360) (Includes: There's Always Something There To Remind Me, Long Live Love, I'll Stop At Nothing, If Ever You Need Me, Girl Don't Come).

Simply CILLA

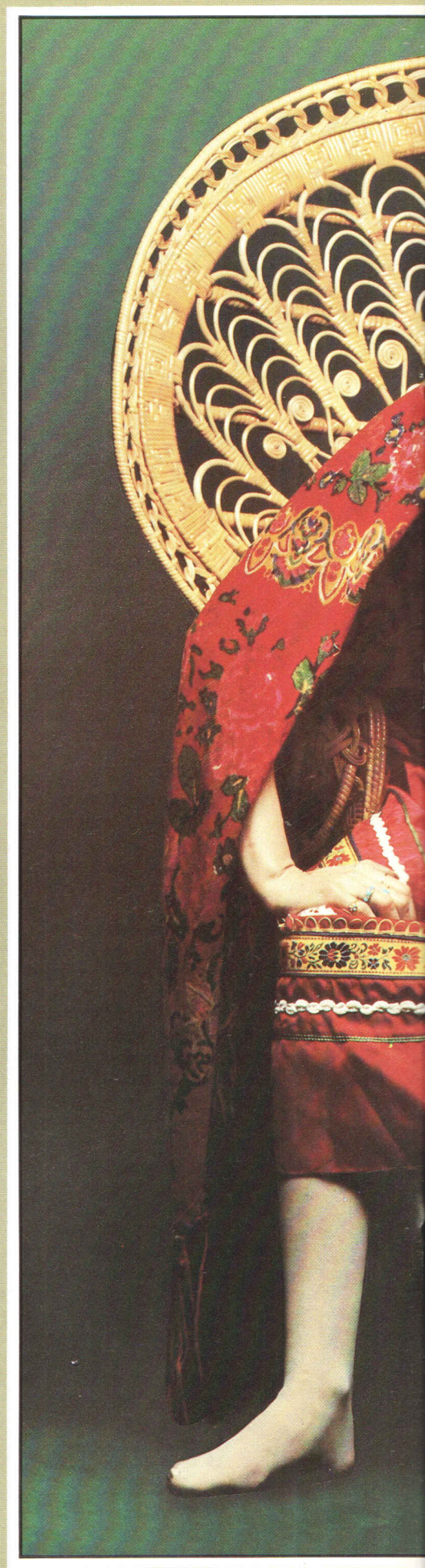
The enduring appeal of Cilla Black

So strong was the American hold on British pop in the pre-Beatles years that virtually every home-grown girl singer was obliged to model herself on either Connie Francis or Brenda Lee. Up-and-coming singers like Susan Maughan, Louise Cordet, Helen Shapiro and vocal duo the Caravelles recorded cover versions of US hits, took their fashion cue from Hollywood and generally lacked the class and self-confidence of their American counterparts. The Beatles, by bringing a new proletarian quality to British pop, helped end the American obsession that gripped artists and audiences alike. It was thanks to them that a vocalist as apparently unpromising as Cilla Black could rise to the top by making a virtue of her provincial English working-class background.

If the Beatles were the fun-seeking, cheeky but fundamentally nice lads from down the road, Cilla was the girl next door. Like the Beatles, she was Liverpool born-and-bred and a member of Brian Epstein's ever-expanding 'stable' of artists, but far more significant to her lasting popularity was her home-spun working girl image. She was gawky, giggled a lot, and came over as a typical northern teenager: she had none of the glamour of a Shirley Bassey or Kathy Kirby, dressed rather plainly and didn't wear heavy make-up, but she was pretty and wholesome and, therefore, seemed somehow more approachable.

Cilla was born Priscilla Maria Veronica White on 27 May 1943, and she attended St. Anthony's Junior and Secondary Schools before leaving at 14 to take up a typing course at Anfield Commercial College. She was an inveterate record-buyer and club-goer and it was at one of the main Liverpool beat group venues, the Iron Door in Temple Street, that she made her public singing debut with one of the local groups. Under

Ringo and Cilla: their provincial working-class charm gained them a mass following and spectacular chart success.



the name of 'Swinging Cilla', she made numerous impromptu appearances with Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, the Big Three and others, without ever seriously considering a singing career.

She received an offer of an audition from jazzman Kenny Ball but, lacking confidence, didn't turn up for that audition and also turned down the chance to go to Hamburg as guest artist with one of the groups. Caution also prevented her from joining Kingsize Taylor and the Dominoes as a permanent member, a move eagerly anticipated by *Mersey Beat* magazine on various occasions during 1962. Changing her stage name to Cilla Black, she preferred to keep her job as cloakroom attendant at the Cavern and join the groups on stage whenever she or they fancied – which was often.

Brian's 'Blue Angel'

It took Brian Epstein to persuade Cilla that a professional career was worth pursuing. He first heard her at the Majestic Ballroom in Birkenhead, singing with the Beatles, and was not particularly impressed; a few months later, in the more intimate atmosphere of the Blue Angel Club, he heard her again and was transfixed. Epstein made his management approach and Cilla was signed to NEMS in September 1963 and to the Parlophone label, run by George Martin, a fortnight later.

Epstein took a passionate interest in her career from the start, even to the point of choosing and designing her stage dresses. His was a very fussy, pernickety style of management anyway, but for Cilla he reserved his very special attention, moulding and grooming her in a way that even the most amenable of his other acts would never have found acceptable. She was his only girl signing and as such warranted, in Epstein's eyes, the full star treatment at every turn.

While other NEMS groups and singers had to be content with prominent yet far from top-billing spots on tours and concert appearances, Cilla was rapidly promoted to headline a season at the most prestigious show-business venue of all, the London Palladium. In Cilla Black, Epstein found a figure with the all-round popular appeal that even the Beatles couldn't quite claim – a singer whose success would win him acceptance within the general entertainment world and enhance his reputation beyond a pop field he knew to be ephemeral.

Her phenomenal success certainly justified all the attention, though the first Cilla Black release – 'Love Of The Loved' (1963), specially written for her by Lennon and McCartney – only reached Number 35 despite a special trumpet arrangement by producer George Martin. The breakthrough came with 'Anyone Who Had A Heart', a Burt Bacharach-Hal David song that was already a hit in America for Dionne Warwick. George Martin altered the original Bacharach arrangement slightly and hurried the record through ahead of the British release date of the Warwick version. Just four weeks later, the record stood at Number 1 and by the end of February 1964 it had sold more than 800,000 copies.

Within three months, the whole process was repeated with 'You're My World', another big ballad with a storming climax and a typically ornate Martin orchestration. Subsequent hits included Lennon and McCartney's 'It's For You' (1964), a version of Randy Newman's 'I've Been Wrong Before', a cover of the Righteous Brothers' 'You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'' (both 1965), and another classic Bacharach-David song, 'Alfie', in 1966.

For a short period, Cilla Black was regarded as one of the most important pop discoveries for years, a singer to rank with the very best American vocal stylists. It rapidly became clear, however, that she was hardly in that league, and her failure

Sixties Cilla giving her all (above left and above); and posing for a publicity shot several years later (right).

to deviate from the big ballad formula revealed her as a rather one-dimensional performer. As a singer she certainly had power and control – but hers was an instinctive vocal talent, not the carefully nurtured, almost theatrical talent of many of her contemporaries. Stardom had the effect of undermining this natural quality and on releases like 'A Fool Am I' (1966), 'I Only Live To Love You' (1967) and Paul McCartney's 'Step Inside Love' (1968) she sounded increasingly mannered in her vocal approach.

Silver screen Cilla

Nevertheless, Cilla Black had the personality to branch out into other areas of entertainment. She made her film debut alongside Gerry and the Pacemakers in *Ferry Cross The Mersey* (1964), but *Work Is A Four Letter Word* (1967) gave Cilla her first and only dramatic role. She found her particular forte in television, starring in her own BBC-TV variety series in the late Sixties and early Seventies and, a little later, in a situation comedy series for ITV. The BBC shows were remarkable for their consistent quality and for the standard of guest artists who agreed to appear and in 1970 she was voted Television Personality of the Year. By this time, she had ceased to need hit records to keep her name before the public, although she enjoyed sporadic successes during the Seventies, notably with 'Something Tells Me' (the theme song from her TV show, 1971), 'Baby We Can't Go Wrong' (1974), and 'Silly Boy' (1978).

The key to Cilla Black's continuing popularity with the family audience is her homely image and her apparent loyalty to her northern roots. Unlike her closest rivals, Sandie Shaw and Lulu, Cilla's career has not been tarnished by private upheavals and the only press criticism to be levelled against her concerned her much-publicised nose operation, performed at a time when cosmetic surgery was very much an expensive and whimsical luxury. Although she all but retired from recording and personal appearances in the late Seventies, to devote more time to her family, she remained in the public eye through occasional articles in women's magazines and guest spots on television.

Musically, Cilla was never an important figure, but what she *did* have was a gauche charm that belied a serious professionalism. As the only Epstein protégé apart from the Beatles to establish a lasting career for herself, she ultimately survived by keeping the essence of her image and appeal intact.

STEPHEN BARNARD

Cilla Black
Recommended Listening

The Best Of Cilla Black (Parlophone PCS 7065) (Includes: Love Of The Loved, Anyone Who Had A Heart, You're My World, You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin', Alfie, Step Inside Love, Sing A Rainbow, Yesterday).

How a child singer found worldwide chart success

A CHILD STAR from the age of 9, when she first sang on stage, Petula Clark had her own radio series a year later and at the age of 11 appeared in her first film. By the time she was 24 she had made almost 30 feature films for J. Arthur Rank; and when she celebrated 21 years in show-business six years later, she had become a million-selling pop star with a large following on the Continent and a Number 1 hit in the UK to her credit.

Child performer

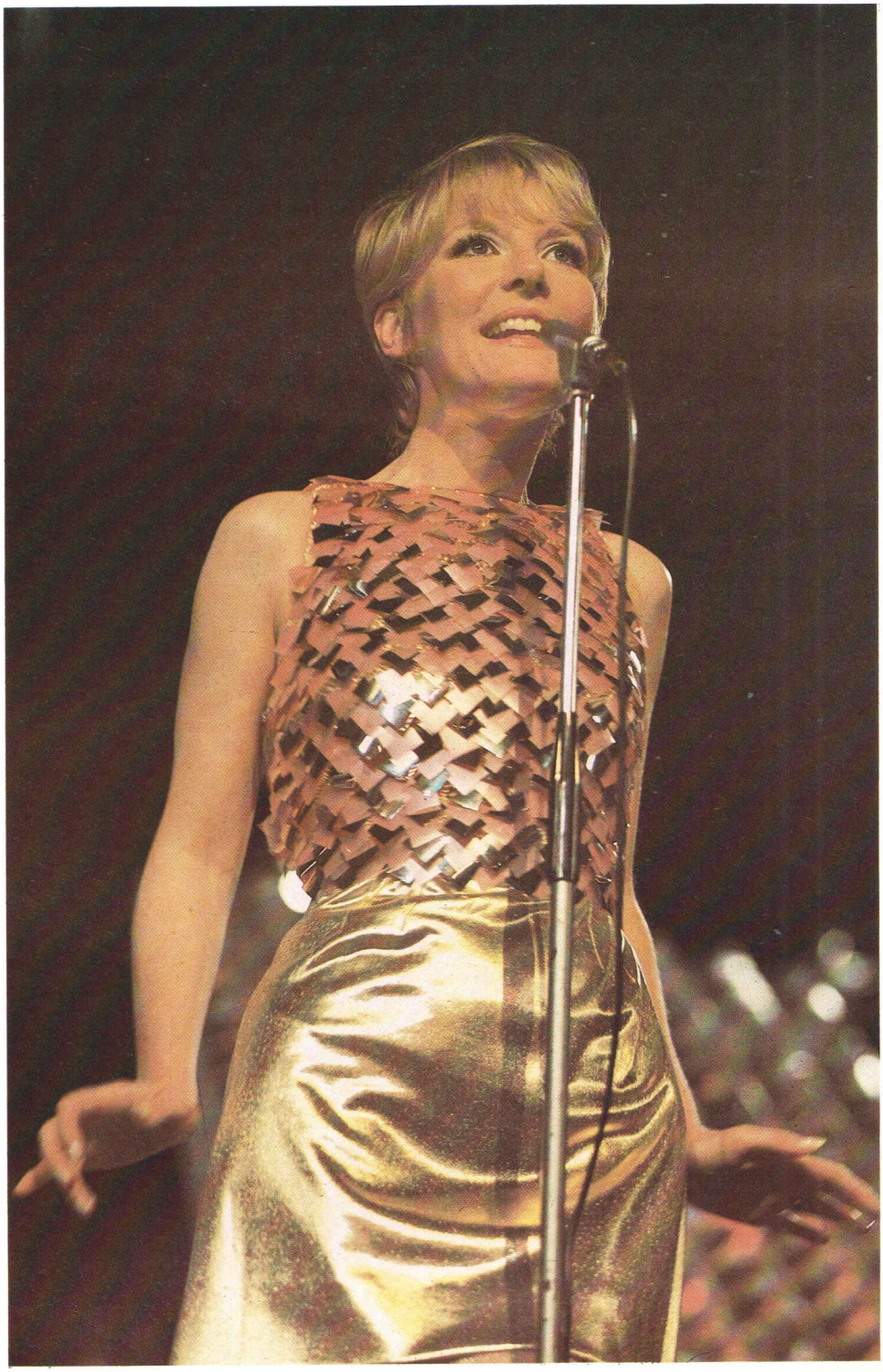
Petula Sally Owen Clark was born in West Ewell, Surrey, on 15 November 1932. Her father had been a member of a travelling theatrical company and her mother had sung in church choirs; both spent time and effort in coaching Little Pet when she showed a liking for music. She sang in school concerts, at fetes and other social events, and became well-known as a confident young performer. In 1941 she made a guest appearance on the BBC radio show 'It's All Yours', singing 'Mighty Like A Rose'. She made such a favourable impression on producers and listeners alike that she was given her own series, 'Pet's Parlour'.

In 1944 she was signed up by Rank. Her first film, *A Medal For The General*, was followed by a succession of similar light-weight dramas, romances and comedies that appealed to family audiences. Pet began recording in parallel with her screen career and covered such US hits as 'Put Your Shoes On Lucy', 'Music Music Music' and 'Silver Dollar'. Alan A. Freeman had signed her for his Polygon label and set about exploiting her public image as a sweet and innocent teenager.

Her father was dictating the course of her career but at the age of 22 she was still acting the child star. The fact that her career was a commercial success did not prevent Petula Clark housing feelings of resentment. As she was later to recall: 'Inside the image the public and my father had of me was a deeply unhappy woman longing to be allowed to grow up. . . . It had begun to frighten me; I knew I must change.'

In 1955 she was signed by the Pye Nixa label. Freeman co-produced her records in association with Michael Barclay, and Peter Knight scored the arrangements. Vogue Records, who handled her releases in France, requested a French-language version of 'Gondolier', one of her early singles; it became a hit in France.

As the Fifties closed, Petula Clark was building a solid reputation in France and Germany, while keeping her British public contented with TV series and personal appearances. Her career, however, lacked definite direction and she herself still felt dissatisfied. In 1959 she met Claud Wolff, promotion executive at Vogue Records, and this was to be the turning point in her



PET SOUNDS

career. Wolff was a liberating force. He took over her management, set about giving her a more up-to-date image and began looking for suitable songs for Petula to record. She moved to Paris to live, and married Wolff in 1961.

Petula Clark's career now exploded into life. She scored her first Number 1 hit in February 1961, when 'Sailor' cruised to the top of the UK charts. 'Romeo', released in July, reached Number 3; this song was recorded in English and French and sold a million copies. At the end of the year 'My Friend The Sea' made the UK Top Ten. 'Monsieur', sung in German and released by Vogue Germany, gave another million-seller in 1962. 'Chariot', a French release, also picked up more than a million sales later in the year. Then came 'Ya Ya Twist', another Alan A. Freeman production, which won a Grand Prix du Disque and reached the UK Top Twenty.

Pet Clark's new-found swinging rock style echoed the beat of the Liverpool bands. Her voice was bright and the tunes rousing, the arrangements were fully scored and solid; the records were a skilful blend of traditional and modern. In France she invariably received standing ovations and French rock fans dubbed her 'La Petulante Petula' (Lively Petula).

Hits with Hatch

In 1963, a year dominated by the Beatles, Freeman handed over the production of Pet's records to a younger man – his assistant, Tony Hatch. A one-time church chorister, Hatch was an all-rounder: he wrote songs, played the piano, and was both an arranger and a producer. He maintained the momentum of Pet's career by distancing her slightly from Merseybeat, blending easy-paced songs with punchy backings.

The new partnership began in spectacular fashion in 1964 when 'Downtown', a Hatch composition, hit first in Europe, climbed to Number 2 in the UK, then shot to the top of *Billboard*'s Hot Hundred on the Warner Brothers label; it sold more than a million copies throughout the world. The following year Pet scored consistently in the US but failed to make the UK Top Twenty: 'I Know A Place', another Hatch song, rose to Number 3 in the States, 'You Better Come Home' got to Number 22 and 'Round Every Corner' peaked at Number 21. Early in 1966 'My Love' gave her her second US Number 1 and her fifth-million seller; in the UK it reached the Number 4 slot. Later in the year, 'I Couldn't Live Without Your Love' made the Top Ten on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1967 Pet's powerful rendition of the Charlie Chaplin composition 'This Is My Song' (from his film *A Countess From Hong Kong*) reached the top in the UK, Number 3 in the US and was another million-seller. Later that year came two songs written by Hatch and his wife, Jackie Trent: 'Don't Sleep In The Subway' reached Number 12 in the UK and Number 3 in the US, and 'The Other Man's Grass' crept into the UK Top Twenty and peaked at Number 31 in the States. In the four years from 1964 to 1967 Petula Clark with Tony Hatch had scored seven Top Twenty hits in the UK and eight in the US. Both 'Downtown' and 'I Know A Place' had won Grammy awards as the best singles of their year.

Petula Clark's career has spanned four decades. The assured young radio performer (above) has developed into the established professional (top, recording for the BBC). Below: The men in Pet's life, husband and manager Claud Wolff (left) and producer Tony Hatch.

After that, the hits were both less frequent and less impressive, and at the end of the Sixties Pet returned to acting, starring in *Finian's Rainbow* (1968) with Fred Astaire and Tommy Steele, and in *Goodbye, Mr Chips* with Peter O'Toole in 1969. Television, cabaret and concerts sustained her throughout the Seventies, and at the beginning of the Eighties she combined both her singing and acting abilities by playing the lead role in a hugely successful London revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *The Sound Of Music*.

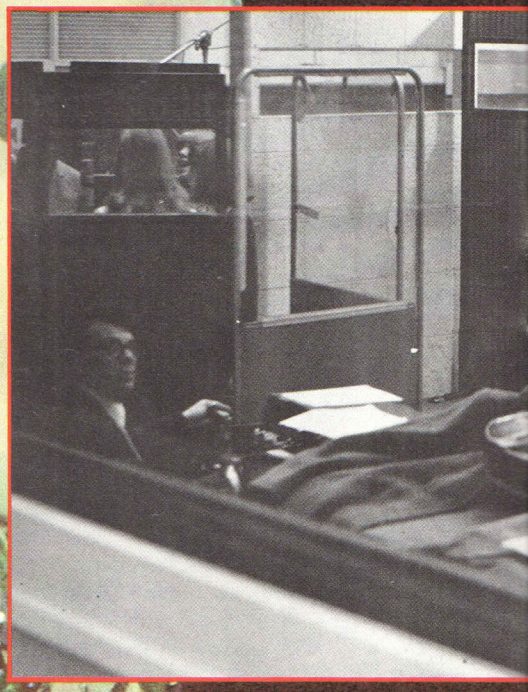
'She was always one of the most versatile singers in the business,' Alan A. Freeman has said. 'She even took part in the London Palladium Swing Sessions on Sundays, with Ted Heath and his Orchestra, singing the scat vocal parts originally laid down by Ella Fitzgerald.' You could say she was one Pet that needed no training – just the freedom to do what came naturally.

PETER JONES

Petula Clark
Recommended Listening

Petula Clark's Greatest Hits (Pye NSPL 18397) (Includes: Downtown, Don't Sleep In The Subway, Colour My World, My Love, The Other Man's Grass Is Always Greener, This Is My Song, I Know A Place, I Couldn't Live Without Your Love).

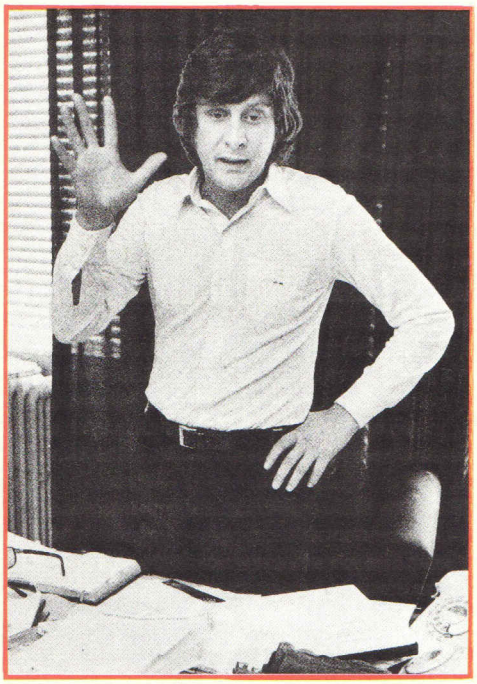
SHOUT!

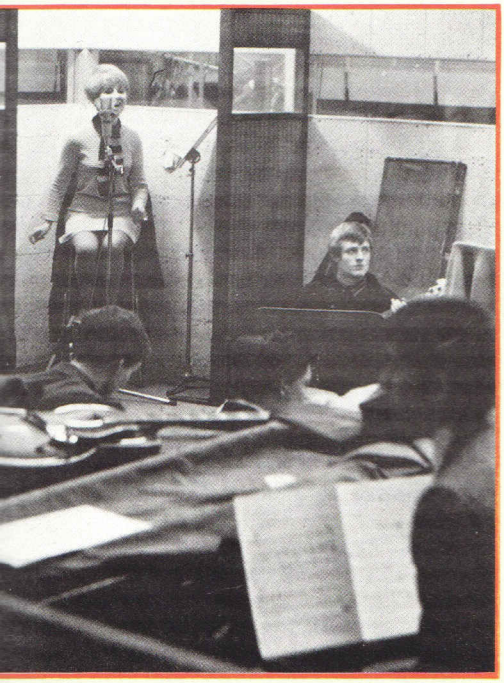


Lulu: the Glasgow rocker who conquered Europe

THE MID SIXTIES was the age of the dolly-bird. Twiggy and Jean Shrimpton ruled the fashion roost, while Jean's sister Chrissie, former model Patti Boyd, ex-convent girl Marianne Faithfull – and many less familiar faces – were featured almost as extensively in the gossip columns as their boyfriends in the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. And dolly-birds sang too: there were hits by Sandie Shaw, Billie Davis, Millie and a diminutive 15-year-old from Scotland with a voice that belied her age – Lulu.

Lulu was born Marie McDonald McLaughlin Lawrie, a butcher's daughter, on 3 November 1948 at Lennox Castle, Lennoxtown – just to the north of Glasgow. At five, Marie had already won a talent contest while on holiday in Blackpool and, by the age of nine, she was appearing regularly with a local semi-professional accordion band. At home, she listened to the hits of Teresa Brewer and was later inspired by the talents of Britain's first rock'n'roller, Tommy Steele. By 1963, she was fronting a band, the Gleneagles (named after one of Scotland's premier golf courses), which played regularly in Glasgow clubs like the Lindella and Le Phonographe. The Gleneagles' line-up comprised Ross Nelson (lead guitar), Jim Dewar (rhythm guitar), Alec Bell (guitar and keyboards), Jimmy Smith (saxophone), Tony Tierney (bass) and David Miller (drums).





Lulu epitomised the youth and vigour of the Swinging Sixties. Opposite: Belting it out on TV, and (inset) performing with the Luvvers in November 1964. Whizz-kid Mickie Most (above left) was the presiding genius at her late-Sixties recording sessions (left). Top: Lulu performs on '5 O'Clock Club' in 1964.

Phonographe favourites

Tony Gordon, owner of Le Phonographe, was sufficiently impressed with the group to introduce them to his sister, Marian Massey, who was involved in show-business in London. Massey agreed to manage the band, changed their name to Lulu and the Luvvers and within a few months had negotiated a recording contract with the Decca label. A cover of the Isley Brothers' 1959 hit 'Shout' was released in the spring of 1964 and entered the British charts in June, eventually reaching Number 7.

As a fast-paced, distinctly white version of a black American R&B hit, 'Shout' followed on from earlier R&B successes like the Beatles' 'Twist and Shout' and the Stones' 'Come On', yet was more raucous and uptempo than either. But whereas Lulu may have had all the appropriate qualities for massive success, she had them in the wrong combination at the wrong time. That she was limited vocally – powerful but shallow, like Ethel Merman or Brenda Lee rather than Aretha Franklin or even Dusty Springfield – is not what really mattered. It was far more significant to the trajectory of Lulu's career that she was 15 years old and female; like most women singers of the time she was expected to be malleable, and at that tender age she had little ability to be anything else.

The result was a series of unremarkable follow-ups to 'Shout'; of the many singles Lulu and the Luvvers released between mid 1964 and early 1966, only 'Leave A Little Love' – an unmemorable number co-written by Tin Pan Alley songsmith Les Reed – made any mark, hitting the UK Top Ten in July 1965. On the other hand, Lulu was already a showbiz personality; in true British pop fashion, she began to emerge as a performer much in demand for TV, radio and pantomime work, the Luvvers remaining resolutely in the background. By 1966, her future as a variety performer was already mapped out.

In February of that year, the Luvvers finally broke with their vocalist. Doubtless dissatisfied with the performance of her Decca releases, Lulu moved over to Columbia a short while later, where she began the association with record producer Mickie Most which was to set the seal on her 'family' image.

Most to the rescue

Most's emergence as a successful producer had almost coincided with Lulu's emergence as a recording artist, and through 1964, 1965 and 1966 he produced hits for the Animals, the Nashville Teens, Herman's Hermits and others. In mid 1966, he gave Donovan his first chart entry in over a year with 'Sunshine Superman', thereby rescuing the 'British Dylan' from early obscurity.

Most's attitude was simple. 'Rock groups today,' he said in 1967, 'take themselves too seriously. They think they're the bosses, but they're terribly wrong. The fans are always the boss and

Lulu's image changed during the Seventies, but she remained a versatile performer. Top: The diminutive singer glides through a ballad before a cabaret audience (left) and punches out a rocker in rehearsal (right). Above: Lulu with Maurice Gibb. Their 1969 marriage ended in divorce six years later.

they can make or break any recording group overnight. When I'm working with my artists I pick the songs, I do the arrangements, and I teach them how to put the number across.' Even granted the bias of a performer manqué, Most's achievement with Donovan – at a time when a year in pop music was almost an eternity – was most impressive. As a result, he gained a reputation as something of a 'career doctor', rescuing ailing recording careers and nursing them back to health.

For Lulu, he picked a jaunty little number written by Neil Diamond called 'The Boat That I Row' and though there was a hint of Lulu's hoarse attack the record was safe, family fare. It shot into the UK Top Ten in April 1967, nearly two years after her previous hit.

That same year, during a British tour supporting the Beach Boys, Lulu met writer and film-director James Clavell, who was casting a movie called *To Sir, With Love*. The film's narrative involved a black teacher (played by Sidney Poitier) who comes to teach in a school in London's East End where he is faced by precocious young girls and aggressive young boys. Clavell offered Lulu a part as a naughty, precocious young girl and the role seemed just right for her: a little bit dangerous, but not really worrying. *To Sir, With Love* proved extremely successful in America and Lulu's recording of the title song (written by Don Black and Mark London) was released in June 1967. It raced to the very top of the US charts, gaining the unusual distinction of being the first British record to top *Billboard*'s Hot Hundred without even entering the British charts.

Boom Bang-A-Bang

In the next few months, Lulu became a major club and TV attraction in the States, while back home Mickie Most kept her in the charts with such playful numbers as 'Me The Peaceful Heart' and 'I'm A Tiger'. In 1969, her status as family entertainer was underlined when she entered the Eurovision Song Contest with the trite 'Boom Bang-A-Bang', which tied for first place with the French, Spanish and Dutch entries. It reached Number 2 in the UK charts. This was to be her last record produced by Most, however, and without his commercial direction, chart success began to elude her once again. Nonetheless, interest in Lulu was maintained by her highly-publicised and somewhat stormy marriage to Bee Gee Maurice Gibb in February 1969. ('We were very young; we should never have married' said Lulu after her divorce in 1975.)

Following her separation from Gibb, Lulu returned to the charts in 1974 with what was arguably her best-ever record, 'The Man Who Sold The World'. The song was written and produced by David Bowie, who also featured on saxophone and back-up vocals. The single reached Number 3 in the UK charts and, due to the Bowie connection, invested the singer with a modicum of belated 'hip credibility'. This was short-lived, however, and Lulu soon settled back into her role as family entertainer with regular television and advertising work.

A mere two singles of substance in the space of 10 years seems a minor contribution to the history of rock. Yet it is doubtful whether Lulu could have fulfilled the early promise displayed on 'Shout' even if circumstances had been different, for as her career developed it became increasingly apparent that she lacked sufficient feel for R&B music to become a major vocalist. As it was, she was too young to resist manipulation by her producers and managers and thus avoid the bland route towards light entertainment. For although the dolly-bird may have given the Sixties one of the decade's most abiding symbols, she was never mistress of her own fate.

GARY HERMAN

Lulu
Recommended Listening

The Very Best Of Lulu (Warwick WW 5097) (Includes: Shout, The Boat That I Row, Leave A Little Love, Try To Understand, Let's Pretend, Take Your Mama For A Ride, Boy, Me The Peaceful Heart, Boom Bang A Bang, I'm A Tiger, To Sir With Love, The Man Who Sold The World).

The Martin Mix

George Martin was an extremely talented arranger as well as an accomplished studio producer. Bottom right: At the console in his AIR studios.

From comedy records to rock classics

WHILE THE MAN HIMSELF might deny it with typical modesty, there's little doubt that George Martin is one of the most celebrated record producers of all time. His fame derives, of course, from his association with the Beatles, with whom he was to work from 1962 onwards. Martin had already produced a Number 1 hit for the Temperance Seven in the previous year, but his achievements with the Beatles broke new ground, both for him and rock as a whole: his arranging, routining and organisational abilities facilitated the translation of Lennon and McCartney's ideas to million-selling vinyl and enabled them to progress to the milestone of *Sgt Pepper* and beyond.

Born in London on 3 January 1926, Martin had no musical family background but he soon showed ability on the piano, which was to stand him in good stead; it helped him make pocket-money leading a dance quintet in his teens. George Martin enlisted in the Fleet Air Arm at the age of 17 and, after demobilisation, was encouraged to enter the Guildhall School of Music. Three years of study left no more obvious career than a menial job at the BBC Music Library until he was approached by Oscar Preuss, head of

EMI's Parlophone label, and taken on as his assistant.

Parlophone at the time was a minor label with a classical background within the giant EMI monolith, and unlike its sister labels HMV and Columbia had no licensing arrangements with American companies. Parlophone's output included Scottish country dance music, light orchestral records, jazz and classical music – none of which were likely to result in hit records. After understudying Preuss for five years and gaining valuable experience in the studio, Martin took over on his superior's retirement and initially proceeded in the Preuss manner, discovering and recording available British talent and occasionally helping to make a record which might sell 3000 copies, a figure regarded as a major success at the time.

Martin's breakthrough came as a result of his frustration at being unable to emulate the success of his sister labels with their American input, which not only provided hits recorded in the US, but on occasion brought to light songs which could be successfully 'covered' by British acts. Typically, Martin found an answer: 'I envied the other labels their advantage, but as I couldn't compete with them on their own level, I had to find something between the cracks, something which other people weren't doing, and that turned out to be comedy, which most people thought wouldn't sell'.

Martin's first notable comedy record was Peter Ustinov's 'Mock Mozart'/'Phoney Folk Lore', on which Ustinov was overdubbed four times performing different parts. Due to the era's primitive recording techniques – multi-track recording was some years away – a major concern was the deterioration in sound quality produced by each overdub, but the record became successful. An even bigger success was the first LP by Peter Sellers, *The Best Of Sellers*, about which his superiors were so sceptical that they would only allow Martin to make a 10-inch album. With typical wit, Martin responded by giving the LP its presumptuous title, and was vindicated when sales swiftly prompted a 12-inch pressing.

Martin produced other comedy successes with singles like 'Hole In The Ground' and 'Right Said Fred' for Bernard Cribbins, while 'You're Driving Me Crazy' was a 1961 chart-topper for the nine-piece Temperance Seven. In addition there was successful work with Rolf Harris, Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren's 'Goodness Gracious Me', and a series of celebrated *Original Cast* albums headed by *That Was The Week That Was* (which launched David Frost), *Beyond The Fringe* which featured Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Jonathan Miller and Alan Bennett) and *At The Drop Of A Hat*, which introduced Michael Flanders and Donald Swann. Also on Parlophone's artist roster were Jimmy Shand, a Scottish dance band leader, modern jazzman Johnny Dankworth and the more traditional Humphrey Lyttelton, all of whom experienced chart success under Martin's guidance.

The producer's experiences with pre-Beatles popular music had, however, been mixed: on a visit to the 2 Is coffee bar in Soho he was impressed enough to sign the

Left: Martin works out an arrangement on the piano. Below: The maestro halts proceedings in order to explain a musical point during a session at the famed Abbey Road studios in London.

Vipers skiffle group for whom he produced two 1957 hits, but turned down the far more successful Tommy Steele. Despite any blind spots in terms of spotting youthful talent, it was undoubtedly the experience of working with a wide range of diverse personalities and musical style that enabled him to strike up an immediate rapport with the brash young Liverpudlians who walked through his door in the spring of 1962.

When he became aware of the Liverpool quartet, the Beatles had been turned down by several major labels including HMV and Columbia. History shows that

Above: Martin chats with one of his brightest stars, Cilla Black. Right: The Bee Gees starred in the 1977 film version of Sgt Pepper, *for which Martin arranged the music. He is pictured with Robin (left) and Barry Gibb. Below right: With the Beatles – tuning up for another recording session at Abbey Road.*

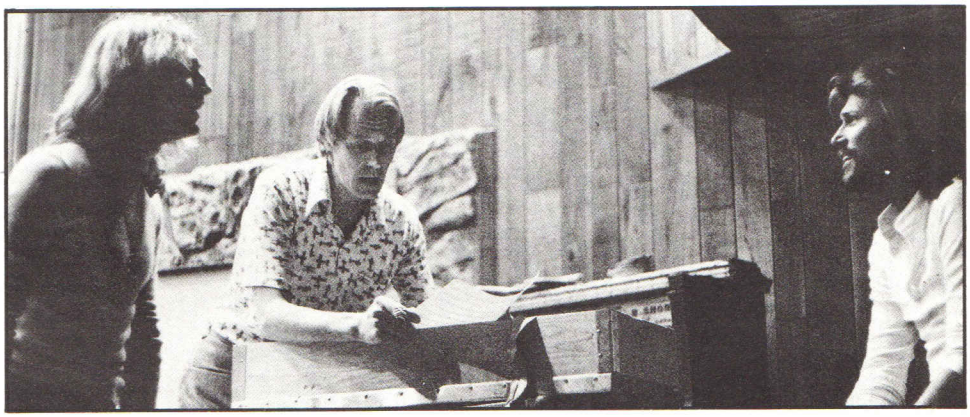
Martin could see something which his peers had failed to perceive in the band. He was also swiftly exposed to the Beatles' unique brand of humour. On asking the group to point out anything they didn't like in a studio playback, George solemnly replied 'Well, for a start, I don't like your tie'. The producer was sympathetic enough to allow the group to record two of their own compositions for their disc debut – at this point Martin admitted that he was 'quite certain their songwriting ability had no saleable future' – but was not satisfied with the playing of original drummer Pete Best. Best's replacement, Ringo Starr, was not allowed to play on every recorded version of the first Beatles' hit, 'Love Me Do', his place for some takes being given, at Martin's insistence, to Andy White, a session drummer.

'Love Me Do' made the Top Twenty, and its follow up, 'Please Please Me', reached Number 2, at which point Martin had to produce an album for the group, to be titled after their big hit. The *Please Please Me* LP was completed in 13 hours and consisted of the Beatles' stage repertoire of the time performed in a pseudo-live manner in the studio and recorded in two-track mono, with voices on one track and music on the other. While this seemed to Martin a good idea, it later rebounded on him when the LP was reissued as stereo, which it patently wasn't.

Martin's early work with the Beatles saw him participating in more than the role of producer, often playing keyboards, suggesting introductions and placing solos, but one major concern for him in his role of record company chief was the group's initial lack of success in America at a time when they were carrying all before them in Britain. Their eventual breakthrough with 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' in 1964 coincided with several earlier Beatle singles, which Martin had licensed to small labels, picking up renewed sales and providing the group with the most impressive chart domination yet.

While the Beatles were obviously George's most notable act, he was initially even more successful with another act managed by Brian Epstein; this was Gerry and the Pacemakers, whose first three singles all topped the British chart. Epstein also provided Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas and then Cilla Black, with the result that between April 1963 and April 1964, his productions topped the UK singles chart for 39 weeks out of 52 – a total which might have been higher had there been enough hours in the day for Martin to produce the Searchers, another Liverpool group with which he was invited to work.

Brian Epstein was busily expanding his NEMS stable of artists and would bring them to Martin assuming he would record them. In Kramer's case Martin had many reservations and he was obliged to use such studio trickery as double-tracking to cover the singer's inadequacies, even bringing the (self-played) piano up in the mix to disguise infelicitous pitching. Martin's personal friendship with Epstein made it even more difficult to turn down

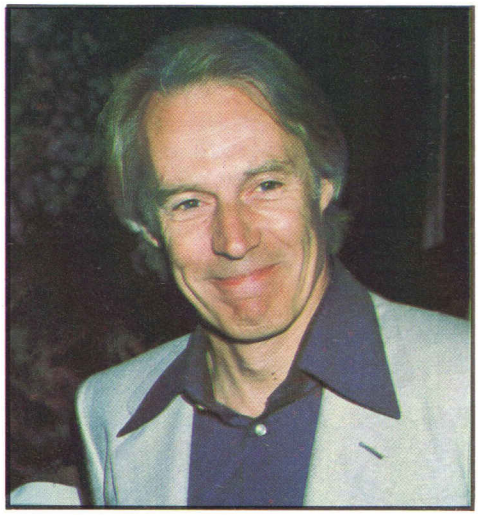


'When George Martin started out as an A&R man, British pop was dominated by the traditional showbiz image of the "star". The traumatic experience of working with Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Bernard Cribbins, the Alberts and, above all else, the Temperance Seven, introduced him to the anarchic pleasure of the individual – and particularly the group of individuals who had no leader, no "front man", each of whom had an equal say in the performance and in the quality of that performance. Without this essential experience he might never have come to appreciate the qualities of the Beatles.

Brian Innes
founder of the Temperance Seven

the production of his artists – particularly when the results were initially so successful – but the continuing rise of the Beatles and the inevitable decline of the other Liverpool acts in chart terms was to remove this headache. Martin remained loyal to Cilla Black, however, even losing Shirley Bassey when an important Cilla concert clashed with a proposed Bassey recording session.

The Beatles and George Martin were a perfect partnership. John and Paul used the classically-trained Martin as a sounding-board for their ideas; he was prepared to meet them half-way, even trying to learn the guitar to enlarge their common ground but the songwriters picked up the piano even more quickly and this idea was discarded. Both producer and artists had an equal regard for each other's abilities, but their working relationship was inevitably to change as the Beatles began to dictate recording schedules and called the tune to a greater extent.



Above: The smile of success. Below: After a distinguished career at EMI, Martin set up his own AIR studios, where he still finds time to play the piano.

Strings and surrealism

Martin's knowledge of the orchestra was to become an increasingly important asset for the partnership. One of the earliest departures from whatever there was in the way of a formula came with the addition of a classical string quartet on 'Yesterday', the string score being written by Martin with Paul McCartney. A few months later, a similar treatment was accorded 'Eleanor Rigby', although perhaps more significant was another track from the *Revolver* LP, 'Tomorrow Never Knows', which Martin described as 'a surrealistic look at building up sound pictures, harking back to the Peter Sellers records'.

This track was apparently the start of a progression which led through 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and 'Penny Lane' to the entire *Sgt Pepper* LP, generally regarded as the peak of the Beatles' creativity, in which Martin played a major part. The final released version of 'Strawberry Fields', for instance, was actually produced by splicing together two entirely separate recordings of the song that had been performed in different keys and at different speeds – John Lennon simply left the job to his producer, confident that it would be done correctly. Martin's ingenuity also came into play during *Sgt Pepper*, when he decided that the only suitable sound effect for one track, 'Being For The Benefit Of Mr Kite', was that of a steam organ or calliope. As it would have been impossible to produce the mechanism which would allow the instrument to play the required tune, Martin cut up tapes of the few existing recordings of calliopes and by judiciously inverting them and sticking them back together at random, achieved the effect which sounds so appropriate on the track. Despite its huge impact on recording technique, the album was completely produced on three rather primitive four-track recorders.

The final chapters of the Beatles' career as a group are sadly well-known, and Martin was as displeased as the majority of the rest of the world with the eventual released version of the *Let It Be* album, conceived by Phil Spector but reportedly a far cry from the original recordings supervised jointly by Martin and Glyn Johns. He was, however, able to preside over *Abbey Road*, the last album to be recorded and actually issued before *Let It Be*.

Fresh AIR

During the Beatles period, Martin broke new ground when he set up the AIR (Associated Independent Recording) organisation in 1965. His former employers, EMI Records, had failed to allow him sleeve credits, but more importantly, had paid him somewhat less than he felt he deserved as the man responsible for the sale of many millions of records. Martin risked losing the Beatles by this move, but felt it essential to make a clean break from the bureaucracy he had fought for so long. Ironically, of course, he had to negotiate with his former employers when it was decided that the relationship between artists and producer should continue: he had to settle for a mere 1 per cent wholesale royalty for UK sales.

Although both Mickie Most and Andrew Oldham had been independent producers prior to the formation of AIR, Martin was the first record company staff producer to leave the fold. He took into partnership Ron Richards, John Burgess and Peter Sullivan, three of the hottest young British producers from EMI and Decca, and pioneered the concept of the independent production company in UK music. Martin's belief that producers should gain their just rewards for their efforts stemmed from the ups and downs in his relationship with EMI. He had been extremely naïve in his first years with the company, but his subsequent experiences gave birth to what he described as 'bitterness, anger and resentment'.

AIR established a major London studio which was soon in great demand, while Martin himself built a further complex on the Caribbean island of Montserrat, where most of his latterday work has been undertaken. During the early Seventies, however, he was still active in London, working with such acts as the acoustic duo/trio America, Jeff Beck – whose first Martin-produced LP, *Blow By Blow*, was acclaimed in America as 'Jazz LP of the Year' in 1975 – and singer-songwriter Jimmy Webb. His subsequent clients have included heavy metal band UFO, American New Wavers Cheap Trick, jazz/rock guitarist John McLaughlin and the more sedate talents of Ella Fitzgerald and Neil Sedaka.

As the elder statesman of British record producers George Martin is in the enviable position of being able to choose the artists with whom he works from a continual series of offers. Inevitably, it is his work with the Beatles which attracts most potential clients, but in a career spanning more than three decades, Martin has contributed far more innovation than that for which he is given credit, and there can be no doubt that today's rock music would sound very different had it not been for his pioneering studio creations. JOHN TOBLER

THE GREAT MUSICIANS

John McLaughlin

Above: McLaughlin favoured a double-neck instrument in his Mahavishnu era, playing either a Gibson or the pictured Rex Bogue guitar, hand-built for him. Overleaf: John searches for the One Truth with a semi-acoustic Gibson.

It is impossible to separate John McLaughlin the man from John McLaughlin the musician; like a few other truly outstanding players he has become known as much for the religious side of his life as for his musical output, for the two sides are equal products of the same total commitment to everything he does. This devotion has been known to embarrass those more used to cynicism, time-serving and apathy, but there is no doubt that his commitment and beliefs are genuine.

As a youth, McLaughlin had studied the violin and piano, but adopted the guitar as his instrument in his early teenage years. Initially influenced by the records of US blues stars, it was in the field of jazz that he found his niche.

In the early Sixties, when McLaughlin was part of the jazz mainstream, he managed to shock the diehards at places like Ronnie Scott's – by playing *standing up*. Hard to understand nowadays, but in the mid Sixties jazz guitarists were supposed to remain coolly seated like Barney Kessel, and certainly not rock and swing the guitar about all over the place as if they were actually getting into the music. At this time he recorded *Experiments In Pop*, an LP of hit-parade songs given a unique jazz treatment. McLaughlin's solos were fast and spiky and featured his characteristic sound, produced by using low-tension strings on a semi-acoustic Gibson guitar – a bendy, slack tone with an aggressive edge to it when played hard.

Another record of the late Sixties was *Extrapolation*, an unusual jazz album that caught the attention of American drummer Tony Williams, who invited McLaughlin over to the USA to play in the short-lived group Lifetime. More importantly, as part of the New York jazz scene McLaughlin started playing with Miles Davis.

It was fortunate that at the very time McLaughlin made the break and left for the United States, Miles Davis was wholeheartedly into the change from his jazz style to what has since been called 'fusion' or 'jazz-rock'. The Davis LP *In A Silent Way* (1969) demonstrated that McLaughlin had found a new home, musically as well as physically. And the relief at having escaped the frustrations of the small-time British jazz scene was apparent in the way that his sound and approach to playing suddenly had a lot more space – there are long sections in the title-track where the guitar is either silent or merely adding a distant chiming sound as accompaniment, before bursting in with a phrase to act as a comment upon some other musician's playing.

For the next two years, until he formed the Mahavishnu Orchestra, McLaughlin was an indispensable part of the New York scene, appearing on the choicest jazz-oriented records and particularly those of Miles Davis. On the double album *Bitches Brew* his guitar-sound is inseparable from the atmosphere of the music, whether playing single-line runs or kicking the rhythm along with sharply-punctuated off-beat chords; Miles Davis even named one of the tracks after him. Listen to this track and the preceding one, 'Spanish Key', for the essence of that period of his playing. On the more uneven film soundtrack *Jack Johnson*, Miles gave him a free hand; McLaughlin responded by blasting out massive wah-wah chords that dominate the record.

In the summer of 1971 McLaughlin formed the Mahavishnu Orchestra, whose music was to transcend the boundaries of jazz and rock. The music was dense, full of power, astoundingly fast in parts and carried the influence of Indian as well as Euro-American culture. McLaughlin's sound was now tighter and more sustained, sitar-like in the exchanges with Jan Hammer's synthesiser and Jerry Goodman's violin. The overall sound of the band was as important as McLaughlin's own brilliance, and it is worth noting that for all his single-mindedness and technical virtuosity he never felt the need to hog the limelight with long 'star' solos.

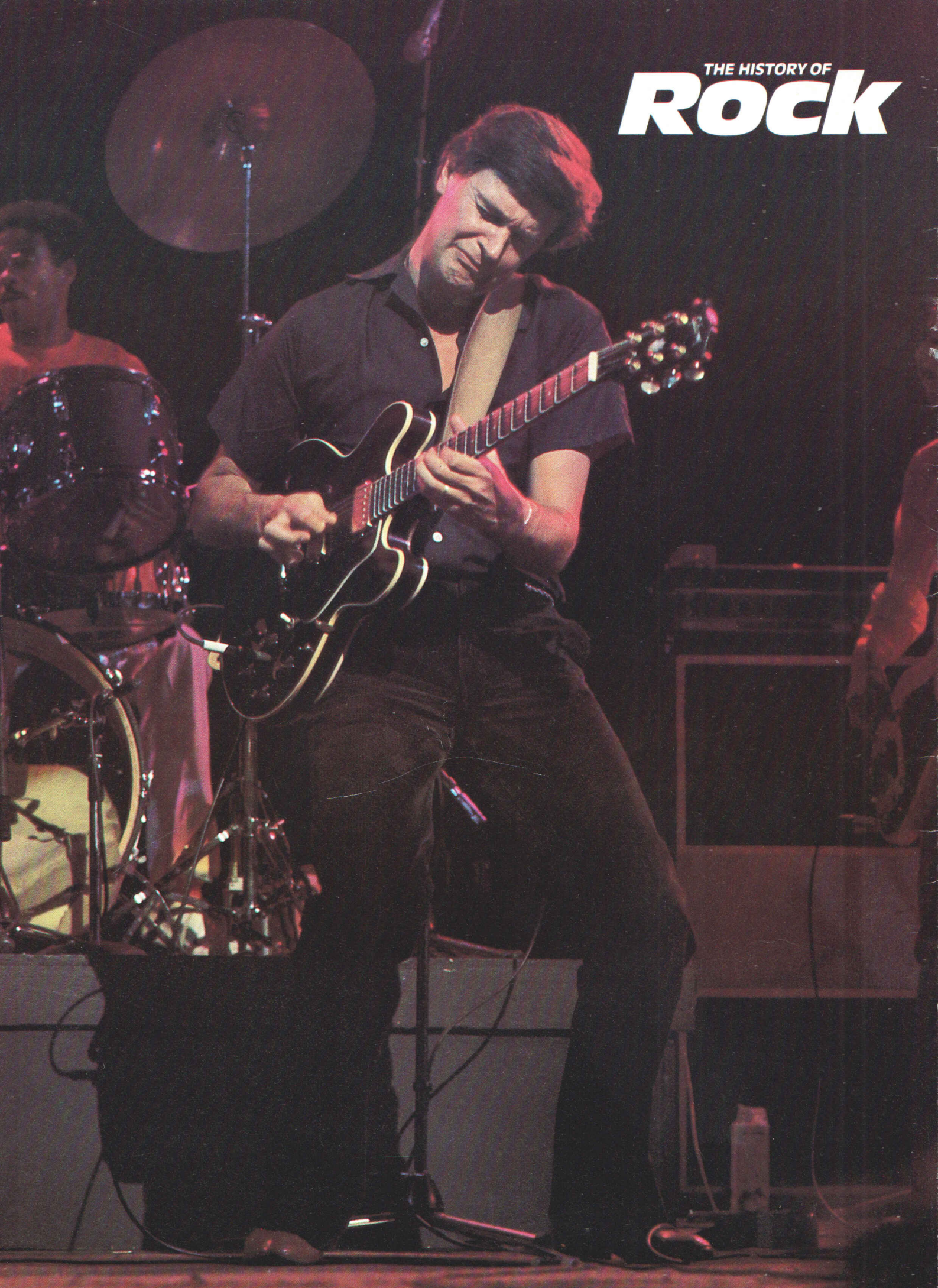
The first album released by the Mahavishnu Orchestra, *The Inner Mounting Fame* (1972), further demonstrated the speed and excitement of McLaughlin's playing and also revealed a gentler side as on 'A Lotus On Irish Streams', where his delicate acoustic picking provided the tune's subtle atmosphere.

Following the break-up of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra in 1973, McLaughlin formed a second Mahavishnu Orchestra – a new and expanded outfit that concentrated on grandiose arrangements of jazz and rock themes, which came to the fore on their debut album *Apocalypse*. As well as some highly-charged electric guitar against lush backing, *Apocalypse* has some beautiful acoustic playing on the track 'Power Of Love', and a few outbursts of funk to balance the awesome orchestral pieces.

McLaughlin was a near-god to many fans for the lifetime of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, a white-clothed, serene figure wedded to his double-necked Gibson guitar. Then, in the late Seventies, following the split with his guru, Sri Chinmoy, he deliberately dissolved the band and set up the lower-profile groups, Shakti and (later) the One Truth Band. The music of the first was uncompromisingly oriental, while that of the latter was an undefined halfway stage on the road back to the West; ironically his guitar sound had returned to the style of the first McLaughlin – the slack-stringed tone of the pre-Miles days.

In terms of sheer technique McLaughlin has few equals; the speed and brilliance of his guitar breaks while playing in the Mahavishnu Orchestra were quite astounding. But McLaughlin has always been more than just a superb technician: he has allied technique to a rare musical sensitivity that at times has produced varied and inventive music of the first order.

HUGH HOPPER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